Amendment to the Claims

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

CLAIMS:

1-69. (Cancelled)

70. (New):   A method of assisting the passage of an entity, the entity being a person, through successive zones to a destination, including the steps of:

associating an identifier with said entity;

creating a plurality of required incidents for said entity, each required incident having a place reference and a time reference associated with it, the required incidents including a final incident for which the place reference is the destination and the time reference is a predetermined time;

at intervals, detecting the presence of said entity in one of said zones and the time of said presence, thereby generating a match;

registering correspondences between the matches thus-generated and said required incidents; and

generating an alert for the entity when the time reference for a required incident is reached and that incident does not have a corresponding match.

71. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein the alert is directed to and delivered to the person.

72. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein a plurality of said zones are areas within a travel interchange.

73. (New):   A method according to claim 72 wherein the travel interchange is any one the group comprising an airport, a shipping port, a bus station or a railway station.

74. (New):   A method according to claim 72, wherein the destination is a departure gate.

75. (New):   A method according to claim 72 wherein at least one zone is outside the interchange.

76. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein the identifier is a wireless identification tag.

77. (New):   A method according to claim 76 wherein the tag is a passive tag and is energised by a transmitted signal.

78. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein there are a plurality of entities, including at least one person, and at least a pair of those entities are associated with each other.

79. (New):   A method according to claim 78 wherein the pair of entities comprise an item of luggage and a person.

80. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein the step of generating an alert includes broadcasting a message.

81. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein the step of generating an alert includes sending an electronic message.

82. (New):   A method according to claim 81 wherein the electronic message is one or more of the group comprising an e-mail, a text message (SMS) or multi-media message (MMS) to a mobile phone, a voice message and a pager message.

83. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein the step of generating the alert uses stored details about the entity.

84. (New):   A method according to claim 70, further including the step of adjusting the time reference of required incidents in response to a change in local conditions.

85. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein the step of creating a plurality of required incidents creates the time references for those required incidents based on data about the entity.

86. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein at least one of the required incidents also includes data about the entity with which it is associated.

87. (New):   A method according to claim 70 further including the step of storing information regarding said required incidents on said identifier.

88. (New):   A method according to claim 87 further including the step of updating the information stored on the identifier as the entity passes through said zones.

89. (New):   A method according to claim 70 further including the step of storing information regarding the entity on said identifier.

90. (New):   A method according to claim 89 further including the step of updating the information stored on the identifier as the entity passes through said zones.

91. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein the step of detecting is only carried out at defined locations.

92. (New):   A method according to claim 91 wherein the defined locations comprise one or more of the group comprising a check-in, a passport control, a metal detector, an X-ray machine and a departure gate.

93. (New):   A method according to claim 92 wherein the defined locations comprise, in sequence, a check-in, a passport control, a metal detector and a departure gate.

94. (New):   A method according to claim 91 wherein at least one of said defined locations is an area through which substantially every entity must pass in order to move between zones.

95. (New): A method according to claim 94 wherein at least one of said defined locations is an area through which every entity must pass in order to reach a destination.

96. (New): A method according to claim 70 wherein the step of detecting is carried out at locations comprising any one of the group comprising a retail entrance or exit, a toilet or rest-room entrance and a restricted area entrance.

97. (New): A method according to claim 96 wherein data regarding usage of the facility where the step of detecting is carried out is stored and analysed.

98. (New): A method according to claim 70 wherein the method comprises the further steps of:

setting a limit for the number of people permitted in at least one of said zones;

counting the number of people in said zone;

comparing said number to said limit; and

creating a signal when the number exceeds said limit or when the number approaches said limit to enable restriction of the number of people moving into said zone.

99. (New): A method according to claim 98, further including the step of adjusting said limit over the course of time.

100. (New): A method according to claim 70 wherein the method comprises the further steps of:

setting a limit for the number of people permitted in at least one of said zones;

counting the number of people in said zone;

comparing the number to said limit; and

generating an alert when the number exceeds said limit or when the number approaches said limit to increase the number of people moving out of said zone.

101. (New): A method according to claim 100, further including the step of adjusting said limit over the course of time.

102. (New):   A method according to claim 70 wherein the step of detecting is only carried out in particular areas at predetermined times.

103. (New):   A method according to claim 70 further including the step of analysing said matches.

104. (New):   A method according to claim 103 further including the step of adjusting one or more of said required incidents according to the outcome of said analysis.

105. (New):   A method according to claim 104 wherein the step of adjusting includes adjusting the time reference of one or more of said required incidents according to the outcome of said analysis.

106. (New):   A method according to claim 104 wherein the step of adjusting includes adjusting the place reference of one or more of said required incidents according to the outcome of said analysis.

107. (New):   A method according to claim 70 further including the step of detecting the passage of a person through a defined area using secondary detection means and matching each such passage with a detected passage of an identifier through the same area, wherein when the passage of a person is detected without a corresponding detected passage of an identifier, an alert is generated.

108. (New):   A method according to claim 107 wherein the secondary detection means is any one of the group comprising an infra-red detector, a video sensor a light beam or a mechanical sensor.

109. (New):   A system for assisting the passage of an entity, the entity being a person, through a plurality of successive zones to a destination, the system including:

        an identifier for said entity;

        at least one storage for storing a plurality of required incidents for said entity, each

required incident having a place reference and a time reference associated with it, the required incidents including a final incident for which the place reference is the destination and the time reference is a predetermined time;

a plurality of detectors for detecting, at intervals, the presence of said entity in one of said zones and the time of said presence, thereby generating a match;

a processing device for registering correspondences between the matches thus-generated and said required incidents; and

an alert generator for generating an alert for the entity when the time reference for a required incident is reached and that incident does not have a corresponding match.

110. (New): A system according to claim 109 wherein the alert generator generates an alert that is directed to and delivered to the person.

111. (New): A system according to claim 109 wherein a plurality of said zones are areas within a transportation travel interchange.

112. (New): A system according to claim 111 wherein the destination is the departure gate of a travel interchange.

113. (New): A system according to claim 111 wherein at least one zone is outside the interchange.

114. (New): A system according to claim 109 wherein the identifier is a wireless identification tag.

115. (New): A system according to claim 114 wherein the tag is a passive tag and is energised by a transmitted signal.

116. (New): A system according to claim 114 wherein the detectors are radio sensors.

117. (New): A system according to claim 109 wherein the detectors are also able to

determine the separation between the detecting means and an identifier.

118. (New):   A system according to claim 109 wherein the detectors can determine the direction of the identifier from the detectors.

119. (New):   A system according to claim 109 wherein a plurality of sensors are arranged close to boundary between two zones in such a way as to provide unconditional determination of which zone the identifier is in.

120. (New):   A system according to claim 119 wherein two rows of sensors are provided, one on either side of the boundary.

121. (New):   A system according to claim 119 wherein further physical arrangements are provided which encourage or force the entity to move in a particular direction, or along a particular path between the zones, or prevent return from a successive zone to an earlier zone.

122. (New):   A system according to claim 119 wherein at least one of said zones is a choke point.

123. (New):   A system according to claim 109 wherein the alert generator includes a broadcast system.

124. (New):   A system according to claim 109 wherein the alert generator means includes an electronic messaging system.

125. (New):   A system according to claim 109 wherein the at least one storage is part of a digital computer.

126. (New):   A system according to claim 109 wherein the identifier is capable of storing information.

127. (New): A system according to claim 126 wherein the information stored on said identifier is capable of being updated by interaction with one or more of said detectors.

128. (New): A system according to claim 109 wherein at least one detector is located at a choke point through which substantially every entity has to pass.

129. (New): A system according to claim 128 wherein at least one detector is located at a choke point through which every entity has to pass.

130. (New): A system according to claim 109 further including a processor for altering properties of said required incidents depending on inputs to the system.

131. (New): A system according to claim 109 further including at least one secondary detector for detecting the passage of a person through a defined area; a processor for registering correspondence between each such passage and a passage of an identifier detected by at least one of said detectors; and a second alert generator for generating an alert when the passage of a person is detected by said secondary detector without a corresponding passage of an identifier being detected.

132. (New): A system according to claim 131 wherein said secondary detector is any one of the group comprising an infra-red detector, a video sensor, a light beam or a mechanical sensor.

133. (New): A system according to claim 109 further comprising:
at least one storage for storing a limit value for the number of people permitted in at least one of said zones; and
a processor for monitoring the total number of people in said zone; for comparing said total number to said limit value; and for creating a signal which restricts the number of people moving into said zone when the total number exceeds said limit, or when the total number approaches said limit.

134. (New): A system according to claim 109 further comprising:

at least one storage for storing a limit value for the number of people permitted in at least one of said zones; and

a processor for monitoring the total number of people in said zone; for comparing said total number to said limit value; and for generating an alert to increase the number of people moving out of said zone when the total number exceeds said limit, or when the total number approaches said limit.

135. (New): A system according to claim 133, wherein the limit is adjusted over time.

136. (New): A system according to claim 134, wherein the limit is adjusted over time.